Lack of employment opportunity abroad

808. SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that even the H1B Visa quota given by India could not be filled up because of enough employment opportunity is not available in that country;

(b) whether it is a fact that many NRIs in USA already employed who have lost their jobs are facing financial difficulties; and

(c) whether Government has any plan to help such people in different countries including USA?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) As per information available a total number of 46,700 petitions for H1B visas have been filed against 65,000 H1B visa cap for 2010.

(b) Indians working in the US, like others have been affected by the recession which has resulted in unemployment rate of 10.2% in October 2009. However no representation from Indian workers in the US has been received by the Mission.

(c) The Mission in Washington has requested the US authorities that H1B visa holders who lost their jobs be allowed sufficient time for winding up his or her affairs or locating another job.

Attack on Indian students in Australia

†809. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attacks on Indian students in Australia have not stopped yet;

(b) the number of students attacked so far;

(c) the number of persons admitted in hospitals and who is taking care of them;

(d) whether any sustainable mechanism is available with the Embassy to tackle this problem;

(e) whether Government proposes to send a parliamentary group there; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) The number of attacks has decreased in the recent past as a result of various intervention measures taken by the Australian authorities at the instance of the Government of India.

(b) The exact number of attacks is not known as the information is not made available to

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Indian Mission/Posts in Australia by Australian authorities citing privacy laws. However, there are reports of attacks on 33 Indian students since 23rd May, 2009.

(c) As on date, no Indian student attacked is in the hospital.

(d) An officer has been designated as the 'Students' Welfare Officer' in the High Commission of India, Canberra as well as our Consulates General in Sydney and Melbourne. As soon as a case of attack comes to the notice, the matter is taken up immediately with local Government authorities. Besides, the High Commission and Consulates also maintain regular liaison with the students in universities and other educational institutions as well as through participating in the meetings and seminars organised by the local Government and law enforcement authorities as well as the Indian community.

In order that all Indian students know that there is an open door for them to come and discuss their problems, the High Commission, the Consulates and the Honorary Consuls have designated every Friday, from 11 am till 5 pm, an 'Open Day' for students, when any Indian student can walk in, without prior appointment, to meet the High Commissioner, Consuls General, the designated Student Welfare Officers and Honorary Consuls and discuss their problems and grievances.

(e) and (f) No, Sir.

Setting up of ICWF

810. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently decided to set up Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) in Indian missions abroad to help overseas Indian in time of distress;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Indian workers working abroad are duped by middlemen in host countries; and

(d) if so, the manner in which such Indian workers would be protected?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Ministry has set up the 'Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)' in the Indian Missions in 17 Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) Countries and Maldives to provide on-site welfare for the Overseas Indian Citizens who are in distress. The Fund (ICWF) is aimed at providing the following services on a means tested basis in the most deserving cases:—

(i) Boarding and lodging for distressed overseas Indian workers in Household/ domestic sectors and unskilled labourers;

(ii) Extending emergency medical care to the overseas Indians in need;